Japanese Lunchboxes and the Food Pyramid

Targeted Standards:

1.1 Interpersonal Communication

1.2 Interpretive Communication

1.3 Presentational Communication

2.2 Products and Practices of Culture

3.1 Making Connections

4.2 Cultural Comparisons

5.1 Communities

In a First Grade integrated Science unit on the Food Pyramid and Healthy eating, students of Japanese learn about foods that support healthy eating habits as well as analyze their own school lunch and that of peers in Japan. To introduce the unit, the teacher uses the Japanese and American Food pyramid to compare and contrast the different formats and text types as well as the concept of “eating a colorful plate”. Students engage in activities where they become familiar with food groups where they become familiar with become familiar with food group names through analysis of Japanese word/sound combinations and items in each group, so they can talk about their own likes and dislikes. Students then focus on their own school lunch and compare their lunch to the Japanese lunch of First graders through comparing literature (nonfiction and fiction stories) about foods and lunches in Japan as well as gathering information on preferred lunches from Japanese students through various internet sources such as ePals. through graphing each student’s lunch for one day into the different food groups. Students determine from the graphs which foods are “healthy” to bring for lunch and which are not. Students experience different foods that they would find in a Japanese “Bento” lunchbox for the first time and express their likes/dislikes as well as what food group they would be found in on the American food pyramid. As a culminating experience, students take home an authentic Bento lunch box and Japanese rice sample to prepare their own lunch for the next day, where they will share what they have brought with their peers.

Reflections

1.1 Students exchange information about what they have brought for lunch in their Japanese Bento Boxes

1.2 Students understand and interpret written words for food groups in the pyramid and food items.

1.3 Students share what they brought in their lunch box, expressing their preferences and reasons for not bringing certain items (i.e. dislikes or unhealthy foods)

2.2 Students observe and identify Japanese foods and discuss how they fit into the food pyramid.

3.1 Students reinforce and further their knowledge of food, nutrition, and the food pyramid.

4.2 Students compare and contrast similarities and differences between American and Japanese food pyramids.

5.1 Students prepare at home a Bento lunchbox, teaching their families the language and culture associated with a Japanese Bento lunchbox.

Green: already embedded CCSS language

Yellow: added CCSS language

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